

REMARKS

Claims 103-116 are now pending in the above-referenced patent application. Applicants respectfully request further consideration of these claims, in view of the amendments set forth above and the following remarks.

New Claims

New claims 113-116 have been added to claim certain preferred embodiments of the invention. Support for these claims can be found throughout the specification, including for example at page 14, lines 22-25.

No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office action rejects claims 103-112 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Higgs et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,661,674).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

"[F]or anticipation under 35 U.S.C. 102, the reference must teach *every aspect* of the claimed invention either explicitly or impliedly." M.P.E.P. §706.02(IV) (emphasis added).

Higgs describes a method for manufacturing flexible sheets having at least one surface comprising a cellular material. *See Higgs, Column 1, lines 6-8*. The cellular material can be polyurethane foam and preferably has an open pored structure. The open-pored structure can be achieved by partial or complete reticulation of the material.

The Examiner has not pointed to, and Applicants cannot find any disclosure in Higgs of a method of making a prosthesis, or the step of extruding a thermoplastic elastomer with the aid of a blowing agent, to produce a foamed graft as is recited in independent claim 103.

For at least this reason, Higgs does not anticipate independent claim 103 or any claims dependent thereon.

Further, Higgs lacks, among other things, any explicit or implied teaching of a "biosynthetic heart valve," a "sewing ring," or a "stent" as recited in present claims 109-111, respectively, let alone those devices made by the method of claim 103.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that article claims 109-112 are not anticipated by Higgs.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 are respectfully requested.

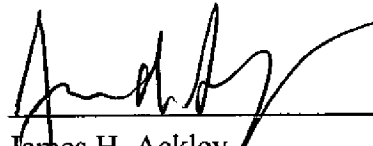
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that no further fees are required in connection with the instant amendment. If necessary, however, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees required in connection with this application to Deposit Account No. 13-2546.

Respectfully submitted,

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